

freshly cut corn stubs.
This one can run fast
with her hands in her pockets.
Her rain-coat is wide open,
it reveals an olympic body
which not just any man could love.
The meager breasts and shoulders
make her streamlined I suppose,
help her speed and her speed
can save her from being ignored.
She runs with a storm breaking,
she rains down the valley,
she thunders past the hedgerows.
Keep your eyes closed as she passes
and please please, don't stand near trees.

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This woman is dark
and fills my life with heartbeats.
She runs down a hill
in a southerly direction
wearing a striped dress
which is torn in several places.
The thrust of her body
travelling so urgently
is almost unbearable.
She leaves a breathless man behind her,
he is unable to catch her up,
his working boots are heavy
and unsteady in the heather.
I dearly hope she is running to me.
The sky is black and contains lightning,
if she reaches me in time
I will tell her lies about myself
and take her home forever.

FOR THE KEEPER OF THE LONG HOUSE

Each morning I am torn from the earth
to work for the man who makes skyscrapers.

This is the Moon of Wild Rice
and still I have nothing saved
for when the Cold Moons come.

Each night when returning to my home
as the sun begins to fall
I pray to the North for redemption.

Since they took away my drum
my songs resound in concrete.
I am only half-wrought and discontent.

How can my son outsing the swan
while I shoot arrows at a continent?

-- Tony Dash

Liverpool, Lancashire, England

THE YOUNG ARE A PAIR OF SCISSORS
AND CUT THEIR WAY OFF THE EARTH

A man who looks as old as China
drifts in his sampan through the final light.
At his knees are stacks of paper cut-outs.
Legend is he started from America
and lost his way centuries ago,
the last stretch of shoreline
finally dissolving.

This evening his boat seems to stop.
Resting the oar upon the roofing of mat,
he pulls out a paper figurine
of Marilyn Monroe,
her body a disaster,
some war her tribe was having
exploding on her knee.
And since the cutter specialized in groups,
a comic doll two inches tall
is holding Marilyn's wrist,
her two-way face a Tracy radio,
her mouth the space at the end
of someone's joke.

The old man imagines Marilyn is his wife.
He takes her hand
stands up in the shakey boat
begins to dance with her and the one-tooth child.
They form a circle, laughing and shouting,
turning faster and faster -- then slowing.
Now they have drifted into the distant waters,
the cobra night starting to swell its neck
around their paper sampan.